United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1737
26 September 1994

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ President of United States, addressing opening meeting of General Assembly's general debate, calls on Secretary-General to set up working group to revitalize United Nations; announces lifting of unilateral sanctions against Haiti.

+ President of Russian Federation proposes new solid system of security, based on cooperation and reform of international institutions; says newly independent States must respect human rights of Russian citizens.

+ Brazilian Foreign Minister proposes convening of United Nations conference to integrate initiatives and programmes for development.

+ President of Mexico says new protectionist trends are hurting developing countries; stresses importance of World Trade Organization.

+ President of Côte d'Ivoire proposes that General Assembly proclaim 1995 international year of univeral solidarity.

+ Finnish Foreign Minister urges Member States to promptly pay United Nations assessments and arrears in full.

+ Algeria's Foreign Minister says Non-Aligned Movement and Group of 77 are more committed than ever to collective efforts for peace and prosperity.

+ Security Council, in resolutions adopted on Friday, demands that Bosnian Serbs cease campaign of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina; imposes broad sanctions on Serb-controlled areas in Republic; allows for suspension of some sanctions against Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

+ Secretary-General, in meeting with United States President, announces appointment of Lakhdar Brahimi as Special Representative for Haiti.

(more)

For information media--not an official record

+ Secretary-General says Commission of Experts will thoroughly investigate allegations of recent massacres in Rwanda.

* * *

United States President William Clinton today called on the Secretary-General to establish a working group to prepare a concrete action plan to revitalize the United Nations. Such a plan would enable the Organization to address the security, economic and political challenges of the next 50 years, he told the General Assembly as it began its general debate. He underlined the need for ready, efficient and capable peace-keeping forces, and said the United States would pay $1.2 billion to United Nations accounts.

President Clinton stressed that the first duty of every Member State was to look after the security and welfare of its own citizens. When its national security interests were threatened, the United States would act with others if it could, but alone if it must; it would use diplomacy when it could, but force if it must. The United States had no desire to be the world's policeman, but would do what it could to promote freedom and democracy.

In Haiti, the United States had demonstrated that it would lead a multinational force when its interests were plain, when the cause was right, when the mission was achievable, and when the international community stood with it. He announced that the United States was suspending all unilateral sanctions against Haiti except those affecting the military leaders and their immediate supporters, and urged other States to do likewise.

United Nations actions in Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrated that progress could be made when a coalition backed up diplomacy with military power, the President continued. However, the situation around Sarajevo had deteriorated in recent weeks and the city faced the prospect of strangulation. The Organization must show a new resolve to enforce its resolutions to save Sarajevo. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) stood ready to act, he concluded.

* * *

The President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, today said his country had been undergoing profound changes, but remained a great Power ready to cooperate with the world community. In an address to the General Assembly, he called for a new solid system of security, based on cooperation and the reform of international institutions. Such a system would respond to new conditions and function under the auspices of the United Nations.

President Yeltsin proposed that negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty be speeded up. The Russian Federation would be ready to sign that treaty next year, when the United Nations was celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. It was also necessary to further develop measures on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Security Council could

(more)

hold a special meeting at the foreign-minister level to coordinate security guarantees for non-nuclear States. The five nuclear Powers should develop a treaty on nuclear security and strategic stability.

The Russian President stressed the importance of regional programmes to strengthen peace and security. It was also necessary to address the economic and social problems resulting from the end of the arms race, particularly those related to the elimination of chemical and bacteriological weapons. He called attention to the situation of millions of Russians in the newly independent States. Those States had to demonstrate their commitment to human rights, and neither a selective approach nor double standards were permissible.

* * *

Brazil's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Celso Luiz Nunes Amorim, told the General Assembly today that his country firmly supported diplomatic efforts to resolve the Haitian crisis. Those efforts must lead to the peaceful removal of the de facto authorities and the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. He expressed concern that the principles of self-determination and non-intervention were the object of interpretations which were incompatible with the Charters of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS). Brazil also sought to bring Cuba fully into the international fold through dialogue and rapprochement. Political and economic isolation was unjustifiable, and only aggravated the hardships of the Cuban people.

Mr. Amorim went on to call for a profound reformulation of the United Nations role in promoting development. Peace and development constituted an indivisible whole, and required comprehensive and coordinated consideration. He proposed the convening of a United Nations conference on development, possibly in 1996, which would integrate initiatives and programmes to promote human dignity and well-being. Brazil also supported the strengthening of the role of the General Assembly and the expansion of the Security Council.

* * *

The President of Mexico, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, today told the General Assembly that the major challenges of the current era stemmmed from profound complexities in the economic and political spheres. The answers did not lie in weapons, but in the will to build consensus; not in imposition, but in the ability to coordinate development policies within a framework of fair competition. Mexico had turned an armed challenge in Chiapas last January into political dialogue within 10 days; it had listened carefully to the voices of the poor and committed itself to solving their problems through political dialogue and in freedom.

The international community must be wary of new protectionist trends, the Mexican President continued. Many developing countries were experiencing deteriorating terms of trade and instability in interest rates. The challenge was to eliminate conditions that impeded the free circulation of goods and

(more)

services. The present opening of markets to competition must be consolidated, and no instrument would be of greater assistance in attaining that goal than the launching of the World Trade Organization.

* * *

President Henri Konan Bedié of Côte d'Ivoire said today that the frontiers of poverty in Africa would only recede if the United Nations reworked the machinery for international cooperation. He told the General Assembly that efforts to establish greater justice in international economic results had not produced success. Instead, there had been an exponential increase in the gap between developed and developing countries, and an economic crisis in Africa since the beginning of the 1980s

President Bedié called for greater solidarity between North and South, and a genuine partnership in an international economy of sharing. He proposed that the Assembly proclaim 1995 as the international year of univeral solidarity to help tackle the injustice of unequal development. Despite problems such as debt and and a lack of technology, and diseases such as malaria and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), Africa would succeed. As the continent best endowed with natural resources, it was determined to realize its enormous potential.

* * *

Finland's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Heikki Haavisto, today called for a greater role for preventive measures in United Nations conflict resolution. Conflicts often erupted because of a lack of preventive action, and a misconceived faith in the Organization's readiness and ability to step in. The United Nations could not always rectify irresponsible actions and policies, nor could it be present forever in conflict areas. While the Security Council bore the primary responsibility for international peace and security, it could not act as a substitute for Member States or their Governments.

The Foreign Minister said many Member States demonstrated a lack of commitment to the United Nations, and called attention to the Organization's critical financial situation. They must change their attitude and promptly pay their assessed contributions and arrears in full, or it would be unable to function. Member States must accept strict financial discipline, and should pay interest on their arrears. Meanwhile, the United Nations must continue its administrative and financial reforms.

* * *

Algeria's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mohamed-Salah Dembri, today said a new kind of political restructuring was needed so that the international community could face current challenges. He told the General Assembly that the Non-Aligned Movement and the "Group of 77" developing countries were more

(more)

ready than ever to engage in an equitable partnership for a better future. Algeria was also working within the Arab Magreb Union and at the United Nations to further those collective efforts for peace and prosperity.

Algeria was involved in a national renovation, Mr. Dembri continued. There was a need to establish a pluralist society based on the implementation of social justice, and to consolidate a state of law and development. Efforts were necessary to combat terrorism, both in its manifestation and in its root causes. Algeria was also coordinating efforts towards building Maghreb unity. It hoped that Libya's constructive suggestions regarding the implementation of United Nations resolutions would lead to a quick solution to that country's situation.

* * *

The Security Council has demanded that the Bosnian Serbs cease their campaign of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina; imposed wide-ranging economic sanctions on Serb-controlled areas of the Republic; and allowed for the suspension of selected sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The Council took those actions by adopting three resolutions under Chapter VII of the Charter on Friday evening.

In unanimously adopting resolution 941 (1994), the Council strongly condemned all violations of international humanitarian law in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly ethnic cleansing in Banja Luka, Bijeljina and other areas controlled by Bosnian Serb forces. It demanded immediate and unimpeded access for representatives of the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red cross (ICRC) to areas of concern. It also asked the Secretary-General to arrange the deployment of United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) troops and United Nations monitors to those areas.

Resolution 942 (1994), which imposed new sanctions against the Bosnian Serbs, was adopted by 14 votes in favour to none against, with China abstaining. It strongly condemned the Bosnian Serbs for refusing to accept the territorial settlement proposed by the Contact Group, and said the sanctions would be reconsidered if they did so. The sanctions apply to "all activities of an economic nature", but the Council permitted exceptions on humanitarian grounds. It said States should freeze the financial assets of Bosnian Serbs or entities under their control. States should also prevent economic activities carried on with any entity owned by persons or entities in areas controlled by Bosnian Serbs. The sanctions will be reviewed whenever appropriate and, in any event, every four months.

The Council adopted resolution 943 (1994) by 11 votes in favour to 2 against (Djibouti and Pakistan), with Nigeria and Rwanda abstaining. It said it would suspend several economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) for an initial 100 days if the border between that country and Bosnia and Herzegovina were closed. It would suspend restrictions on air travel for civilian passengers; the impoundment of vessels, freight vehicles and aircraft; maritime traffic; sporting events; and cultural exchanges.

(more)

The Security Council asked the Secretary-General to report every 30 days on the border closure and immediately report any evidence that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was not honouring it. Any report to that effect would terminate the suspension unless the Council decided to the contrary.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had a 40-minute meeting with United States President William Clinton in New York yesterday. They discussed cooperation between the United Nations and the United States, which the Secretary-General described as excellent. He also welcomed the announcement that the United States would pay some $1.2 billion to United Nations accounts by the end of the year.

The Secretary-General and the President discussed problem areas around the world, particularly Bosnia and Herzegovina and Haiti. The Secretary-General said he had appointed Lakhdar Brahimi as his Special Representative for Haiti, effective immediately. They also discussed the situations in Angola, Mozambique, El Salvador, the Western Sahara, and Gaza-Jericho.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali today said that the Commission of Experts established by Security Council resolution 935 (1994) would thoroughly investigate allegations that members of Rwanda's Hutu community had recently been massacred. The United Nations involvement in that investigation would be coordinated by his Special Representative for Rwanda, Shahryar Khan.

Last month, a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) mission visited Rwanda to assess whether conditions existed for the safe return of refugees from Burundi, United Republic of Tanzania and Zaire. The mission had obtained certain information appearing to indicate that soldiers of the Rwandese Patriotic Front might have been engaged in systematic killings of members of the majority community in Rwanda.

The High Commissioner briefed Secretariat officials on 16 September, and the Secretary-General directed that the allegations should be taken up immediately with the Rwandese Government. That was done on 20 September, and the Government undertook to investigate the allegations urgently. A team consisting of four Government ministers, representatives of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) and the UNHCR, and a United Nations human rights monitor paid a first visit on 23 September to some of the places where the killings were alleged to have taken place.

* *** *